

Artists & Galleries / Floral Paintings

Beautiful Blossoms

THIS SPRING, VISIT LAGUNA BEACH ART GALLERIES TO VIEW STUNNING FLORAL PAINTINGS
BY ANNA KINCAIDE AND MARIA BERTRÁN.

By ASHLEY RYAN

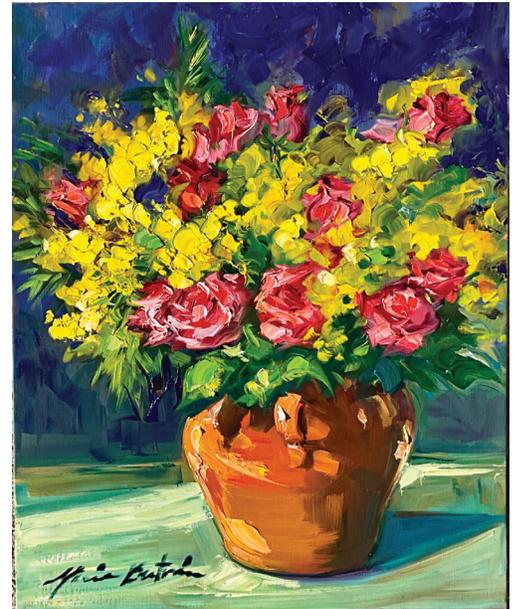
Despite taking two very different approaches to their subject matter, artists Anna Kincaide and Maria Bertrán have one beautiful thing in common: They incorporate stunning florals into their artwork. Both long-time exhibitors at Laguna Beach galleries, these artists offer scenes that scream spring, celebrating nature's vibrant beauty by inviting viewers into a world of color and life. From Kincaide's feminine figures to Bertrán's plein air masterpieces, their artwork serves as the perfect representation of the season's renewing energy.

FLORALS ON LOCATION



Art has been a vessel to so much more for Maria Bertrán, a plein air painter in constant pursuit of capturing the beauty of light and nature. From vibrant fields and vases of flowers to doorways framed by cascading blossoms, nearly every piece she creates has some form of florals within.

"I work mostly in oil painting, and color is a key element in my canvases," Bertrán says.



Left: Peonies and Apples; right: Winter Bouquet

"Flowers reunite the color, shape and live beauty that inspires many of my paintings."

Originally born in Caracas, Venezuela, she now splits her time between Provence, France, and our artsy beach town. After graduating from Washington University's School of Fine Arts in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1978, she continued her art education through individual workshops while continuing to expand her talents. Roughly a decade later, she connected with Paul Jillson, the owner of the local Pacific Edge Gallery, and has been exhibiting her scenic artwork here in Laguna for nearly 40 years.

Her main goal is to share her passion for painting, sharing her love of flowers and landscapes with collectors all over the world. Each piece is painted live. "To me, it is very important to feel the presence of the physical subject," she says.

Her work has taken her around the globe, but, whether painted on location in Italy, Mexico, Tahiti, France, her home country of Venezuela or right here in Laguna Beach,

Bertrán applies thick amounts of oil paint to her linen canvases, creating intense contrast with bold color. From rich red poppies, radiant sunflowers and ethereal lavender to vivid pops of color courtesy of Alpine wildflowers or tropical flora, her work encourages her to embrace the journey and convey the beauty of the natural world no matter where she travels.

She paints still lifes of vased flowers as well, curating them to perfection before she begins working. "I carefully choose my favorite flowers and arrange them myself, making sure light touches them on one side to create depth," she explains.

This May, some of Bertrán's newest works will be on display at Pacific Edge Gallery, showcasing her many travels as well as pieces painted here in California. Stop by to embrace the beauty of spring blossoms all summer long.

MARIA BERTRÁN
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FEMININITY BLOOMING

Since she was a child, art has been a crucial part of the fabric of Anna Kincaide's life. "I felt as naturally compelled to create art as I did to eat and sleep," she says. "It was innate."

Although she was originally hoping to major in fine art, she was talked out of it, pivoting to earn a degree in interior design at Florida State University. However, Kincaide notes that much of what she learned in design school has contributed to her art in the years since.

Originally pulled toward portrait drawing, Kincaide was fascinated in her youth by the intricacies of the human body. Women, especially, captivated her interest. "We are so very layered, complicated and beautiful," she explains. "I feel similarly about flowers. Like women, flowers are a symbol of strength, perseverance, beauty [and] decay. I felt such a likeness between the two subjects and it felt natural when I started to blend them."

She considers her style unique and her process unconventional, likely stemming from being a self-taught artist. Her materials and techniques vary: Though oil paint is crucial to the pieces she creates, Kincaide also incorporates acrylic paint, drawings and textured materials like paper to add to the layered effect of her work.

"I find, after several months, I get bored and need to change up my process. But generally I start with research of images and ideas," Kincaide notes. "I always paint the female first and her composition largely directs the rest of the piece. I like to work with a lot of different colors and patterns as well. The florals always come last, sort of like icing on the cake."

She draws inspiration from many different sources, including the women in her life, politics, flowers she sees on her daily walks, music and even other works of art. "Inspiration is everywhere if you are open to it," she explains.

Although she is still based in Florida, Kincaide has been a resident artist at JoAnne Artman Gallery here in town for around eight years. "It has been a wonderful place to grow my work and ... [Artman's] continuing support is vital for my career," she says. "We often brainstorm ideas ... and she is such a cheerleader for all of her artists and really encourages them to be artists. That kind of support can be hard to find."

Overall, with her bloom-filled pieces,

Right: Go Your Own Way; middle: Figment of My Imagination (Diptych); bottom: Anna Kincaide



COURTESY OF JOANNE ARTMAN GALLERY

Kincaide hopes to convey a sense of power, beauty, abundant life, growth and creativity. "Flowers are so resilient, dying back year after year only to grow again even stronger and more vibrant," she notes. "In essence, they are an extension of these women, representing their inner being and beauty. ... There's a lot of craziness happening these days, and it is more important than ever to see women for our vital role in this world. None of this would exist without us, and I want these figures to own that narrative."

Her work is currently on display at JoAnne Artman Gallery as part of the "Southern Charm" group exhibition, running through June 30. ■

ANNA KINCAIDE
ANNAKINCAIDE.COM



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